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POLITICAL ANALYSIS: USSR: LOCAL CONSTITUTIONS STIMULATE
NATIONALIST PASSIONS IN GEORGIA

1. BEGIN SUMMARY. THE NATIONALITIES PROBLEM CONTINUES TO
CAUSE DOMESTIC PROBLEMS IN THE USSR, AS THE CYCLE OF ADOP-
TION OF REPUBLIC CONSTITUTIONS THIS YEAR AGAIN DEMONSTRATED.

ALTHOUGH THE RECENTLY RATIFIED REPUBLIC CONSTITUTIONS
INITIATED NO NEW DEPARTURES IN NATIONALITY POLICY, ATTEMPTS
AT RUSSIFICATION WERE MADE IN THE DRAFT CONSTITUTIONS OF

THE THREE TRANSCAUCASIAN REPUBLICS. THESE ATTEMPTS WERE DROPPED IN THE FACE OF RESISTANCE BY GEORGIAN PUBLIC OPINION.

2. THE GEORGIANS, HOWEVER, MAY HAVE DISCOVERED THAT NATIONALISM IS A DOUBLE-EDGED SWORD, FOR THEY SUBSEQUENTLY WERE CONFRONTED WITH ABKHAZIAN PROTESTS AGAINST GEORGIAN DISCRIMINATION. BEFORE THE ABKHAZIAN HUBBUB SUBSIDED, MOSCOW HAD INTERVENED TO SUPPORT SOME ABKHAZIAN CLAIMS, THOUGH NOT THE MORE EXTREME ONES. THE GEORGIAN AND ABKHAZIAN EPISODES SHOW THAT THE LEADERSHIP CONTINUES TO BELIEVE THAT A CARROT-AND-STICK APPROACH IS BEST ABLE TO CONTAIN SEPARATIST TENDENCIES. END OF SUMMARY.

3. BEGIN TEXT. WHEN THE 15 USSR REPUBLIC SUPREME SOVIETS RATIFIED THE REPUBLIC CONSTITUTIONS THIS YEAR, THE AIM WAS TO MATCH THE USSR CONSTITUTION ADOPTED LAST YEAR. WHILE PARTY LEADERS INSISTED THAT THE NEW CONSTITUTIONS WERE HOMEGROWN PRODUCTS, DRAFTED BY LOCAL CONSTITUTIONAL COMMISSIONS AND SUBMITTED IN DRAFT FORM TO POPULAR DISCUSSION, THE PREPARATORY PROCESS IN FACT INVOLVED EXTENSIVE COORDINATION WITH MOSCOW. IN SPEECHES TO THE RAIFYING SESSIONS OF THE REPUBLIC SUPREME SOVIETS, A NUMBER OF LOCAL PARTY CONFIDENTIAL

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BOSSES ADMITTED TO "CONSULTATIONS" WITH THE CPSU CENTRAL COMMITTEE. THE EXTENT OF THESE CONSULTATIONS CAN BE JUDGED BY THE UNIFORM ORGANIZATION OF THE DIFFERENT CONSTITUTIONS AND BY THE IDENTICAL WORDING OF CORRESPONDING ARTICLES.

4. AS DOCUMENTS SUPPOSEDLY DESIGNED TO RECORD AND LEGITIMIZE LOCAL "PECULIARITIES," THE NEW CHARTERS MIGHT HAVE SIGNALLED A MAJOR CHANGE IN USSR NATIONALITY POLICY. IN FACT, THEY DID NO SUCH THING. THEY CONTAIN NO EVIDENCE EITHER OF GREATLY INCREASED TOLERANCE FOR LOCAL LINGUISTIC AND CULTURAL RIGHTS OR OF ATTEMPTS AT FULL-SCALE RUSSIFICATION AND RAPID ELIMINATION OF INDIVIDUAL NATIONAL DISTINCTIONS. ARTICLE 34 OF THE RSFSR CONSTITUTION (AND THE CORRESPONDING ARTICLES OF THE OTHER CONSTITUTIONS) CAME AS CLOSE AS ANY TO REAFFIRMING PAST POLICY.

(A)--ON THE ONE HAND, IT EMPLOYED IDEOLOGICAL JARGON TENDING TO DIMINISH THE SIGNIFICANCE OF NATIONAL DIFFERENCES. IT APPROVED, FOR INSTANCE, THE "RAPPROCHEMENT (SBLIZHENIE) OF ALL NATIONS AND NATIONALITIES" AND ADVOCATED THE "REARING OF CITIZENS IN A SPIRIT OF SOVIET PATRIOTISM AND SOCIALIST INTERNATIONALISM."

(B)--ON THE OTHER HAND, IT GUARANTEED THE "ALL-AROUND DEVELOPMENT OF NATIONS AND NATIONALITIES" AND MADE ILLEGAL ANY FORM OF RACIAL OR NATIONAL DISCRIMINATION. INDIVIDUAL NATIONALITIES WERE GUARANTEED "THE POSSI-

BILITY TO USE THE NATIVE LANGUAGE," ALTHOUGH THIS RIGHT WAS DILUTED BY THE PHRASE "AND THE LANGUAGES OF OTHER PEOPLES OF THE USSR."

IN SUM, ARTICLE 34 APPEARED TO STRIKE A BALANCE BETWEEN A DESIRE TO CREATE A SUPRANATIONAL SOVIET CULTURE, WHICH BY NECESSITY WOULD ENTAIL INCREASED USE OF THE RUSSIAN LANGUAGE, AND A DESIRE NOT TO OFFEND UNDULY LOCAL LINGUISTIC AND CULTURAL SENSIBILITIES.

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5. CHANGES IN THE TRANSCAUCASIAN CONSTITUTIONS

6. IN CONTRAST TO THIS GENERAL POLICY OF REAFFIRMING THE STATUS QUO, AT LEAST A SYMBOLIC ATTEMPT AT RUSSIFICATION WAS MADE IN THE DRAFT CONSTITUTIONS OF THE THREE TRANSCAUCASIAN REPUBLICS OF ARMENIA, GEORGIA, AND AZERBAYDZHAN. IN THESE THREE--AND ONLY THESE THREE--REPUBLICS, WHERE LOCAL LINGUISTIC AND CULTURAL SENSITIVITIES ARE ACUTE AND WHERE RELATIVELY FEW RUSSIANS RESIDE, THE OLD CONSTITUTIONS HAD GRANTED OFFICIAL STATUS TO THE LANGUAGE OF THE TITULAR NATIONALITY. (NOTE: ACCORDING TO THE 1970 CENSUS, RUSSIANS CONSTITUTED 2.7, 8.5, AND 10 PERCENT OF THE POPULATION LIVING, RESPECTIVELY, IN ARMENIA, GEORGIA, AND AZERBAYDZHAN. IN CONTRAST, ETHNIC RUSSIANS CONSTITUTED 42.4 PERCENT OF THE POPULATION OF KAZAKHSTAN, 29.8 PERCENT OF THE POPULATION OF LATVIA, AND 29.2 PERCENT OF THE POPULATION OF KIRGIZIYA.) WHEN THE DRAFTS OF THE NEW CONSTITUTIONS WERE PUBLISHED IN MARCH OF THIS YEAR, HOWEVER, THE PROVISION CONFERRING OFFICIAL STATUS TO THE NATIONAL LANGUAGE WAS DELETED IN ALL THREE.

7. IN ADDITION, ARTICLE 110 OF THE GEORGIAN DRAFT CONSTITUTION EMPOWERED THE RELEVANT GOVERNMENTAL BODIES TO PUBLISH LAWS, DECREES, AND RESOLUTIONS IN RUSSIAN AS WELL AS GEORGIAN AND, IN THE AUTONOMOUS REPUBLICS, THE INDIGENOUS LANGUAGES OF THOSE AREAS. SINCE THE COMPARABLE PROVISION IN THE OLD GEORGIAN CONSTITUTION HAD NOT MENTIONED RUSSIAN, THIS CHANGE REPRESENTED AN ELEVATION OF RUSSIAN VIS-A-VIS GEORGIAN. THE OLD ARMENIAN AND AZERBAYDZHANI CONSTITUTIONS HAD MENTIONED RUSSIAN IN THIS REGARD, SO THE ARMENIAN AND AZERBAYDZHANI DRAFTS REGISTERED NO SIGNIFICANT CHANGES IN THIS PROVISION.

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8. IN AZERBAYDZHAN, LEAST SENSITIVE OF THE THREE REPUBLICS TO THE LANGUAGE ISSUE, THE ARTICLE OF THE OLD (1956) CON-

STITUTION THAT DESIGNATED AZERI AS THE REPUBLIC'S OFFICIAL LANGUAGE WAS SIMPLY DELETED: THE NEW DRAFT CONSTITUTION

PUT NOTHING IN ITS STEAD. IN GEORGIA AND ARMENIA, HOWEVER, THE DRAFTS INSERTED THE FOLLOWING ARTICLE:

(A)--"THE (ARMENIAN/GEORGIAN) SSR ENSURES THE USE IN STATE AND CULTURAL AND OTHER INSTITUTIONS OF THE (ARMENIAN/GEORGIAN) LANGUAGE AND EXERCISES STATE CONCERN FOR ITS ALL-OUT DEVELOPMENT.

(B)--"IN THE (ARMENIAN/GEORGIAN) SSR THE FREE USE IN ALL OF THESE ORGANS AND INSTITUTIONS OF RUSSIAN AND ALSO OF OTHER LANGUAGES USED BY THE POPULATION IS ENSURED ON THE BASIS OF EQUALITY."

9. THE FAILURE OF THIS ARTICLE TO DESIGNATE GEORGIAN AND ARMENIAN AS OFFICIAL LANGUAGES, ALONG WITH ITS GUARANTEE OF THE "FREE USE" OF RUSSIAN ON A "BASIS OF EQUALITY" WITH OTHER LANGUAGES, REPRESENTED A VICTORY FOR RUSSIFIERS IRKED BY THE ANOMALOUS STATUS PREVIOUSLY ACCORDED THE TRANS-CAUCASIAN LANGUAGES. THE VICTORY WAS FAR FROM TOTAL, HOWEVER, FOR THE NEW PROVISIONS HAD AFTER ALL BEGUN BY MAKING SPECIAL OBEISANCE TO LOCAL LINGUISTIC LOYALTIES. NONE OF THE OTHER REPUBLIC CONSTITUTIONS EXPRESSED SUCH SOLICITUDE FOR THE NATIONAL LANGUAGE, AND ITS INCLUSION IN THE GEORGIAN AND ARMENIAN DRAFTS WAS A MAJOR CONCESSION TO MODERATES FEARFUL OF AROUSING INTERCOMMUNAL STRIFE.

10. REACTION IN GEORGIA

11. THIS "COMPROMISE" WAS NOT ACCEPTABLE TO A SIGNIFICANT SEGMENT OF THE GEORGIAN POPULATION, AND A DEMONSTRATION CONFIDENTIAL

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TOOK PLACE IN TBILISI ON APRIL 14. ALTHOUGH THE SIZE AND NATURE OF THE DEMONSTRATION REMAIN MURKY, THE BULK OF THE PARTICIPANTS WERE APPARENTLY UNIVERSITY STUDENTS. THE DEMONSTRATORS GATHERED IN FRONT OF THE REPUBLIC SUPREME SOVIET--WHICH WAS THEN IN THE PROCESS OF RATIFYING THE CONSTITUTION--TO PROTEST THE DRAFT CONSTITUTION'S DELETION OF GEORGIAN AS THE OFFICIAL LANGUAGE. ACCORDING TO UNOFFICIAL ACCOUNTS, PARTY BOSS EDUARD SHEVARDNADZE TWICE ADDRESSED THE CROWD, THE SECOND TIME PROMISING TO RESTORE THE DELETED LANGUAGE PROVISIONS.

12. ON APRIL 16, THE GEORGIAN NEWSPAPER ZARYA VOSTOKA PUBLISHED THE FINAL TEXT OF THE NEW CONSTITUTION, WHICH CONTAINED REVISED LANGUAGE PROVISIONS. IN ADDITION TO REINSTATING GEORGIAN AS THE REPUBLIC'S OFFICIAL LANGUAGE, THE REVISIONS FURTHER STRENGTHENED THE LANGUAGE'S POSITION BY:

(A)--ADDING EDUCATIONAL INSTITUTIONS TO THOSE INSTITUTIONS MENTIONED IN THE DRAFT CONSTITUTION IN WHICH USE OF GEORGIAN WAS EXPLICITLY ENSURED;

(B)--DELETING THE WORDS "ON THE BASIS OF EQUALITY" FROM THE PARAGRAPH IN THE DRAFT CONSTITUTION THAT ENSURED THE "FREE USE" OF RUSSIAN IN STATE AND CULTURAL INSTITUTIONS.

SINCE THE LANGUAGE OF TEXTBOOKS AND EDUCATIONAL INSTRUCTION HAS BEEN AN ISSUE IN GEORGIA, THESE CHANGES WERE SIGNIFICANT CONCESSIONS TO LOCAL FEELING.

13. IDENTICAL REVISIONS WERE MADE IN THE LANGUAGE PROVISIONS OF THE ARMENIAN CONSTITUTION, THE FINAL VERSION OF WHICH WAS RATIFIED ON APRIL 14, THE DAY OF THE GEORGIAN DEMONSTRATION. THE OBVIOUS COORDINATION BETWEEN THE TWO
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REPUBLICS (AND MOSCOW) AND THE TIMING OF THE ARMENIAN CONSTITUTION SUGGEST THAT THE DECISION TO BACKTRACK ON THE LANGUAGE ISSUE CAME BEFORE RATHER THAN AFTER THE DEMONSTRATION.

14. NONETHELESS, GEORGIAN PUBLIC OPINION MAY HAVE BEEN INSTRUMENTAL IN EFFECTING THE TURNAROUND. GEORGIAN FIRST SECRETARY SHEVARDNADZE ADMITTED AS MUCH WHEN HE TOLD THE RATIFYING SESSION OF THE GEORGIAN SUPREME SOVIET THAT:
"(AFTER CONDUCTING) A STUDY OF PUBLIC OPINION AMONG REPRESENTATIVES OF WORKERS, COLLECTIVE-FARM PEASANTS, AND THE INTELLIGENTSIA, AMONG STUDENTS AND YOUTH AS A WHOLE, (THE CONSTITUTIONAL COMMISSION AND THE GEORGIAN CENTRAL COMMITTEE HAD CONCLUDED THAT IT WAS) EXPEDIENT TO LEAVE IN FORCE THE WELL-KNOWN FORMULATION OF THE PRESENT CONSTITUTION, WHICH PROCLAIMS THE GEORGIAN LANGUAGE THE STATE LANGUAGE." SHEVARDNADZE FURTHER EXPLAINED THAT THESE SOUNDINGS OF PUBLIC OPINION HAD BEEN VERIFIED BY "SPECIAL INVESTIGATIONS" UNDERTAKEN BY THE COUNCIL ON PUBLIC OPINION, A BODY UNDER THE JURISDICTION OF THE GEORGIAN CENTRAL COMMITTEE.

15. DIVISIONS WITHIN THE LEADERSHIP

16. THIS RETREAT IN THE FACE OF GEORGIAN PUBLIC OPINION CAUSED DIVISIONS WITHIN THE TOP PARTY LEADERSHIP. IN HIS LENIN DAY ADDRESS (APRIL 21), MIKHAIL SOLOMENTSEV, CANDIDATE-MEMBER OF THE POLITBURO AND CHAIRMAN OF THE RSFSR COUNCIL ON MINISTERS, APPEARED TO SUPPORT CONCESSIONS TO THE GEORGIANS, ARGUING THAT: "LIFE ITSELF HAS LAUGHED AT THOSE WHO HAVE TRIED TO DEPICT RAPPROCHEMENT OF THE NATIONS AND ETHNIC GROUPS OF THE SOVIET UNION AS SOME KIND OF

LEVELING AND AS THE LIQUIDATION OF NATIONAL ORIGINALITY. THE MORAL AND CULTURAL RICHES CREATED BY EACH SOCIALIST NATION ARE DEAR TO US BY VIRTUE OF THEIR UNIQUE QUALITIES."
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17. ALTHOUGH SOLOMENTSEV FAILED TO NAME THE TARGET OF THIS BARB, CIRCUMSTANTIAL EVIDENCE INDICATES THAT IT MAY HAVE INCLUDED BREZHNEV HIMSELF:

(A)--IN COMMENTING ON THE REPUBLIC CONSTITUTIONS BEFORE THE PRESIDUM OF THE SUPREME SOVIET (MAY 16), BREZHNEV SHOWED SOME SYMPATHY FOR THOSE AT WHOM "LIFE ITSELF HAS LAUGHED." WHILE ENDORSING AN ATTITUDE OF "PROPER SOLICITUDE AND RESPECT" FOR "SPECIFIC NATIONAL FEATURES," HE EXPLAINED THAT "...FOLLOWING LENIN'S BEHESTS, THE PARTY PERSISTENTLY EDUCATES THE WORKING PEOPLE IN A SPIRIT OF INTOLERANCE TO NATIONAL NARROW-MINDEDNESS AND CONCEIT."

(B)--ALTHOUGH AZERBAYDZHAN FOLLOWED THE EXAMPLE OF ARMENIA AND GEORGIA AND REINSTATED AZERI TO ITS FORMER OFFICIAL STATUS, IT ADOPTED THE OTHER LANGUAGE PROVISIONS OF THE ARMENIAN AND GEORGIAN DRAFT CONSTITUTIONS. SEVERAL WEEKS LATER, AZERBAYDZHANI FIRST SECRETARY ALIYEV, A BREZHNEV FAVORITE, OUTLINED IN A SPEECH TO A TEACHERS' CONFERENCE A PROGRAM FOR THE MORE EXTENSIVE TEACHING OF THE RUSSIAN LANGUAGE.

18. BOTH ARMENIAN AND GEORGIAN PARTY OFFICIALS APPEARED TO BE AWARE THAT THE TURNAROUND ON THE LANGUAGE ISSUE HAD COME OVER THE OBJECTIONS OF POWERFUL PARTY FIGURES. ARMENIAN PARTY BOSS DEMIRCHYAN, IN HIS SPEECH TO THE RATIFYING SESSION OF THE ARMENIAN SUPREME SOVIET, FAILED TO MENTION THE REWRITING OF THE LANGUAGE CLAUSES, EVEN THOUGH THIS SECTION WAS THE ONLY PART OF THE DRAFT CONSTITUTION THAT WAS SIGNIFICANTLY CHANGED. IN A SPEECH FESTOONED WITH TRIBUTES TO THE "GREAT RUSSIAN PEOPLE," SHEVARDNADZE
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ATTEMPTED TO REASSURE THE RUSSIANIZERS, TELLING THE GEORGIAN SUPREME SOVIET THAT GEORGIANS HAD TO STUDY RUSSIAN IF THEY WANTED "TO MASTER THE ACHIEVEMENTS OF SCIENCE AND MAINTAIN LINKS WITH MODERN WORLD CIVILIZATION." SIMILARLY, GEORGIAN SECOND SECRETARY KOLBIN WARNED THAT THE PARTY HAD "TO TAKE ACTIVE MEASURES TO OVERCOME THE HARMFUL SURVIVALS OF CHAUVINISM AND NATIONALISM, ALL MANIFESTATIONS OF NATIONAL NARROW-MINDEDNESS."

19. TROUBLE IN ABKHAZIYA

20. GEORGIAN PARTY LEADERS, IN THEIR ATTEMPTS TO SATISFY BOTH THEIR MASTERS IN MOSCOW AND THEIR LOCAL GEORGIAN CONSTITUENTS, APPARENTLY HAVE NOT PAID SUFFICIENT ATTENTION TO THEIR LOCAL ETHNIC MINORITIES. AT THE 25TH CPSU CONGRESS

IN 1976, SHEVARDNADZE HIMSELF LAMENTED SHORTCOMINGS IN THE REPUBLIC'S NATIONALITY POLICY. THIS LAMENT WAS SECONDED AT THE SAME CONGRESS BY THE THEN FIRST SECRETARY OF THE ABKHAZIAN OBKOM, V. M. KHINTBA.

21. AT THE RECENT SESSION OF THE GEORGIAN SUPREME SOVIET CONVOKED TO RATIFY THE GEORGIAN CONSTITUTION, SHEVARDNADZE AND OTHER DEPUTIES IMPLIED THAT THESE NATIONALITY PROBLEMS WERE PART OF THE PAST. THIS WAS NOT TRUE, HOWEVER. ON APRIL 20, ZARYA VOSTOKA ANNOUNCED THAT AN ABKHAZIAN PARTY PLENU; PRESIDED OVER BY GEORGIAN SECOND SECRETARY KOLBIN HAD REMOVED KHINTBA AS ABKHAZIAN FIRST SECRETARY AND ASSIGNED HIM TO A POST IN THE GEORGIAN CENTRAL COMMITTEE APPARATUS. WHILE NO REASON WAS GIVEN FOR KHINTBA'S TRANSFER, UNOFFICIAL REPORTS SUGGEST THAT IT MAY HAVE STEM-MED FROM HIS ACQUIESCENCE IN--OR EVEN ENCOURAGEMENT OF--MANIFESTATIONS OF ABKHAZIAN NATIONALISM. ACCORDING TO ONE REPORT, A MAJOR LETTER-WRITING CAMPAIGN, LASTING FROM FEBRUARY THROUGH APRIL AND PROTESTING GEORGIAN ECONOMIC AND CULTURAL DISCRIMINATION, WAS UNOPPOSED, AND PERHAPS SUP-PORTED, BY ABKHAZIAN PARTY OFFICIALS.

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22. IN LATE MAY, AS THE ABKHAZIYA ASSR PREPARED TO RATIFY ITS NEW CONSTITUTION, THE NATIONALITY QUESTION CAME TO A BOIL. AGAIN, ACCORDING TO UNOFFICIAL AND PERHAPS EXAGGER-ATED REPORTS, ON OR ABOUT MAY 21 AS MANY AS 30,000 ABKHAZIS GATHERED IN SUKHUMI, THE CAPITAL CITY OF THE AUTONOMOUS REPUBLIC, TO DEMAND:

(A)--SHIFTING THE ABKHAZIAN AUTONOMOUS SOVIET SOCIALIST REPUBLIC (ASSR) FROM GEORGIAN JURISDICTION TO THAT OF THE RUSSIAN SOVIET FEDERATED SOCIALIST REPUBLIC;

(B)--AN END TO GEORGIAN EXPLOITATION OF ABKHAZIAN ECO-NOMIC RESOURCES (HEALTH RESORTS, PRIVATE AGRICULTURAL PLOTS, RENTAL DACHAS, AND TOBACCO AND CITRUS FRUIT INDUSTRIES) AND THE CONSTRUCTION OF A MODERN HIGHWAY, A LOCAL TELEVISION TRANSMITTER, AND A LOCAL UNIVERS-ITY; AND

(C)--REMOVING GEORGIAN AS AN OFFICIAL LANGUAGE OF THE ASSR, MAKING ABKHAZI THE ONLY OFFICIAL LANGUAGE. (NOTE: THIS WAS

AN EXTRAVAGANT DEMAND BECAUSE ABKHAZIS CONSTITUTE ONLY 15.1 PERCENT OF THE POPULATION OF THE ABKHAZIAN ASSR. THEY ARE OUTNUMBERED BY THE GEORGIANS, WHO CONSTITUTE 41 PER-CENT OF THE POPULATION, AND BY THE RUSSIANS, WHO MAKE UP 19.1 PERCENT. IN TOTAL, ONLY SOME 77,000 ABKHAZIS RESIDE IN THE ABKHAZIAN ASSR.)

WHEN SHEVARDNADZE ATTEMPTED TO CALM THE CROWD, HE REPORT-

EDLY WAS WHISTLED OFF THE PODIUM. BEFORE THE DAY WAS OUT, THE NEW ABKHAZIAN FIRST SECRETARY, B. V. ADLEYBA, AND CPSU CENTRAL COMMITTEE SECRETARY KAPITONOV, WHO HAD COME TO
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GEORGIA TO MEET WITH BOTH GEORGIAN AND ABKHAZIAN PARTY OFFICIALS, HAD ADDRESSED THE CROWD. ACKNOWLEDGING THAT CENTRAL PARTY AND STATE ORGANS HAD FOUND ABKHAZIAN COMPLAINTS TO HAVE A "DEFINITE BASIS," KAPITONOV PROMISED IN HIS ADDRESS THAT, "WITHIN THE LIMITS OF EXISTING POSSIBILITIES," CENTRAL AUTHORITIES WOULD TRY TO REDRESS ABKHAZIAN GRIEVANCES.

23. MOSCOW MAKES LIMITED CONCESSIONS

24. KAPITONOV'S PROMISE WAS SUBSTANTIATED ON JUNE 7, WHEN ZARYA VOSTOKA PUBLISHED A CPSU CENTRAL COMMITTEE AND USSR COUNCIL OF MINISTERS' DECREE OUTLINING A PROGRAM FOR THE ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT OF ABKHAZIYA. AMONG ITS MAJOR PROVISIONS WERE:

(A)--INSTRUCTIONS TO APPROPRIATE USSR MINISTRIES TO EXPAND PRODUCTION IN ABKHAZIYA, IMPROVE PASSENGER AND FREIGHT TRANSPORTATION, ORGANIZE TELEVISION TRANSMISSION, AND SUBMIT PLANS FOR ORGANIZING A UNIVERSITY IN SUKHUMI;

(B)--INSTRUCTIONS TO GOSPLAN TO ALLOCATE CAPITAL INVESTMENTS IN ITS 1979-85 DRAFT PLANS FOR CONSTRUCTION OF ABKHAZIAN HOUSING, HOSPITALS, SCHOOLS, ADMINISTRATIVE BUILDINGS, AND THE ABKHAZIAN SECTION OF THE BLACK SEA HIGHWAY; AND

(C)--INSTRUCTIONS TO RELEVANT USSR MINISTRIES TO TAKE STEPS, ALONG WITH THE GEORGIAN COUNCIL OF MINISTERS, TO REDUCE POLLUTION AND DEFORESTATION, IMPLEMENT MEASURES FOR LAND RECLAMATION, AND INSURE THE CONSTRUCTION OF HOTHOUSE UNITS.

25. ALTHOUGH THIS WAS THE SECOND TIME IN AS MANY MONTHS THAT THE REGIME HAD MADE CONCESSIONS TO LOCAL NATIONALIST SENTIMENT, THE AUTHORITIES WERE CAREFUL TO LIMIT THE CON-
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CESSIONS. THE PARTY AND GOVERNMENTAL DECREE CONCERNED

ALMOST EXCLUSIVELY ECONOMIC MATTERS, AND EVEN HERE ITS PRECISE MEANING WAS OFTEN VAGUE. THE COMMITMENT TO MANY OF THE PROJECTS MENTIONED IN THE DECREE DID NOT GO BEYOND MENTIONING THEM IN THE 1979-85 DRAFT PLANS; NO RUBLE FIGURES WERE ANNOUNCED FOR ANY OF THE PROJECTS; AND THE SOURCE OF

FUNDING IN MOST INSTANCES WAS UNSPECIFIED.

26. FURTHERMORE, THE REGIME TOOK STEPS TO DISASSOCIATE ITSELF FROM THE MORE EXTREME ABKHAZIAN NATIONALIST DEMANDS, LEST THEY STIMULATE SIMILAR DEMANDS IN OTHER REPUBLICS. IN HIS MAY 21 SPEECH, KAPITONOV TOLD THE ABKHAZIS THAT CENTRAL ORGANS HAD REFUSED THE ABKHAZIAN REQUEST TO TRANSFER JURISDICTION OVER THE ASSR AND TO DROP GEORGIAN AS AN OFFICIAL LANGUAGE. ABKHAZIAN OFFICIALS WERE ENLISTED IN THIS ATTEMPT TO DAMPEN ABKHAZIAN NATIONALIST FERVOR. SPEAKING TO A PARTY RALLY ON MAY 21, THE NEW ABKHAZIAN FIRST SECRETARY, B. V. ADLEYBA, ENDORSED AN APRIL 21 GEORGIAN CENTRAL COMMITTEE RESOLUTION THAT, ACCORDING TO ADLEYBA, JUSTLY CRITICIZED THE SHORTCOMINGS OF THE ABKHAZIAN PARTY ORGANIZATION AND CALLED FOR GREATER PARTY DISCIPLINE.

27. QUOTING BREZHNEV'S INJUNCTION AGAINST "NATIONAL NARROW-MINDEDNESS AND CONCEIT," ADLEYBA WARNED ABKHAZIAN PARTY OFFICIALS THAT "UNACCEPTABLE PROPOSALS" HAD BEEN MADE DURING THE PROCESS OF PREPARING THE ABKHAZIAN CONSTITUTION. LATER ABKHAZIAN SPEAKERS EXPLAINED THAT THESE PROPOSALS WERE THE DEMAND TO TRANSFER JURISDICTION OVER THE ASSR AND THE DEMAND TO DROP GEORGIAN AS AN OFFICIAL LANGUAGE.

28. MOSCOW EXPLOITS ABKHAZIAN NATIONALISM

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29. MOSCOW'S WILLINGNESS TO MAKE EVEN LIMITED CONCESSIONS TO THE ABKHAZIS WAS DOUBTLESS A CONTINUATION OF THE MODERATE NATIONAL POLICY IN EVIDENCE WHEN THE REGIME RETREATED IN THE FACE OF AROUSED GEORGIAN PUBLIC OPINION. CIRCUMSTANTIAL EVIDENCE INDICATES, HOWEVER, THAT, WHILE MOSCOW MADE EFFORTS TO RESTRAIN ABKHAZIAN NATIONALISM THROUGH TIMELY ECONOMIC CONCESSIONS AND THE REJECTION OF EXTREME DEMANDS, IT ALSO USED EVENTS IN ABKHAZIYA TO PUT THE GEORGIANS ON NOTICE THAT INFLAMED NATIONALISM CAN WORK TO GEORGIAN DISADVANTAGE.

(A)--MOSCOW APPEARED QUICK TO INFORM THE GEORGIANS THAT THEY HAVE AN "ABKHAZIAN PROBLEM"; KAPITONOV'S MAY 21 SPEECH RECOUNTING ABKHAZI COMPLAINTS AND REFERRING TO THE ABKHAZI LETTER-WRITING CAMPAIGN WAS PUBLISHED IN THE GEORGIAN CENTRAL PRESS; A MINISTRY OF HEALTH OFFICIAL, IN EXPLAINING THE REFUSAL OF LATE MAY

FOREIGN DIPLOMATIC TRAVEL PERMITS TO SUKHUMI, SURPRISINGLY REFERRED TO "DISTURBANCES OF A LOCAL CHARACTER."

(B)--GEORGIANS WOULD HAVE DESIRED A MORE UNEQUIVOCAL DISMISSAL OF THE ABKHAZIAN DEMAND TO DISMEMBER GEORGIA;

KAPITONOV INDICATED THAT, WHILE CENTRAL AUTHORITIES HAD DISMISSED THIS DEMAND AS UNCONSTITUTIONAL, THEY HAD GIVEN IT SERIOUS CONSIDERATION.

30. GEORGIAN LEADERS THEMSELVES SEEMED TO BE AWARE OF THESE IMPLIED THREATS. SHEVARDNADZE'S SPEECH ON JUNE 6 TO AN ABKHAZI PARTY RALLY (ATTENDED BY THREE OFFICIALS FROM THE CPSU CENTRAL COMMITTEE) FOLLOWING RATIFICATION OF THE ABKHAZIAN CONSTITUTION WAS EXTREMELY DEFENSIVE IN TONE. THE GEORGIAN LEADER TOOK CREDIT FOR THE DECREE OF THE CPSU CENTRAL COMMITTEE AND THE USSR COUNCIL OF MINISTERS, EXPLAINING THAT THE CENTRAL AUTHORITIES HAD ACTED AT THE CONFIDENTIAL

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INSTIGATION OF THE GEORGIAN CENTRAL COMMITTEE. AT THE SAME TIME, HE ATTEMPTED TO CURRY FAVOR WITH MOSCOW THROUGH REPEATED REFERENCES TO THE "GREAT RUSSIAN PEOPLE" AND "GREAT RUS'." IN PAPERING OVER POSSIBLE DIFFERENCES WITH MOSCOW, SHEVARDNADZE, IN SHORT, SEEMED TO HAVE RECEIVED THE MESSAGE THAT NATIONALISM CAN BE USED AGAINST AS WELL AS FOR INDIVIDUAL REPUBLICS.

31. CONCLUSION

32. THE DEMONSTRATIONS IN GEORGIA AND ABKHAZIYA REVEAL THE CONTINUING FORCE OF NATIONALISM IN THE USSR AND SUGGEST THAT THIS FORCE, IF UNCHECKED, COULD CONSTITUTE A THREAT TO THE INTEGRITY OF SOME REPUBLICS AS WELL AS TO THE UNITY OF THE COUNTRY AS A WHOLE. GEORGIAN RESISTANCE TO EVEN SYMBOLIC RUSSIFICATION INDICATES THAT THIS FORCE MAY BECOME EVEN STRONGER IF MOSCOW DECIDES TO FORCE THE ISSUE. AT THE SAME TIME, RECENT EVENTS IN ABKHAZIYA DEMONSTRATE THAT ETHNIC DISPUTES WITHIN A REPUBLIC CAN IN SOME CASES BE EXPLOITED BY CENTRAL AUTHORITIES TO CHECK THE PAROCHIAL NATIONALISM OF THE REPUBLIC AS A WHOLE.

33. THE CURRENT LEADERSHIP APPEARS AWARE OF THE DANGERS OF AGGRAVATING NATIONALIST TENSIONS. BOTH THE PROVISIONS OF THE NEW REPUBLIC CONSTITUTIONS AND THE REGIME'S CONCESSIONS TO GEORGIAN AND ABKHAZIAN NATIONALISM REFLECT A MODERATE POLICY OF ATTEMPTING TO CREATE A SUPRANATIONAL "SOVIET" CULTURE WITHOUT AT THE SAME TIME UNDULY AFFRONTING LOCAL NATIONAL PRIDE. THIS POLICY, WHICH HEAVILY EMPHASIZES THE

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT OF INDIVIDUAL REGIONS AND REPUBLICS, HAS BEEN SUCCESSFUL TO DATE IN CONTAINING SEPARATIST TENDENCIES. IT ALSO REFLECTS THE PRACTICAL IMPOSSIBILITY CONFIDENTIAL

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OF QUICKLY ELIMINATING THE "VESTIGES" OF NATIONALISM WITH-

OUT EMPLOYING MEANS OF REPRESSION NOW CONSIDERED
UNACCEPTABLE. END OF TEXT. CHRISTOPHER

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Original Classification: CONFIDENTIAL
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Subject: NATO ASSESSMENT SERIES CONTRIBUTION
TAGS: PGOV, XH
To: OIC PTC INFO ALL NATO CAPITALS
Type: TE
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